



Senate

General Assembly

February Session, 2002

File No. 79

Senate Bill No. 395

Senate, March 19, 2002

The Committee on Public Safety reported through SEN. PENN of the 23rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF FLASHING RED LIGHTS ON MOTOR VEHICLES OF FIRE CHIEFS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (c) of section 14-96q of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
3 *October 1, 2002*):

4 (c) Flashing lights are prohibited on motor vehicles other than
5 school buses, except (1) as a means for indicating a right or left turn, (2)
6 flashing blue lights used by members of volunteer or civil
7 preparedness fire companies, as provided by subsection (b) of section
8 14-96p, (3) on certain emergency and maintenance vehicles by written
9 permit from the commissioner, (4) flashing or revolving yellow lights
10 on (A) wreckers registered pursuant to section 14-66, or (B) vehicles of
11 carriers in rural mail-delivery service or vehicles transporting or
12 escorting any vehicle or load or combinations of vehicles or vehicles
13 and load which is or are either oversize or overweight, or both, and

14 operated or traveling under a permit issued by the Commissioner of
15 Transportation pursuant to section 14-270, (5) flashing red lights (A) on
16 a motor vehicle accommodating fifteen or fewer handicapped students
17 used only during the time such vehicle is stopped for the purpose of
18 receiving or discharging such handicapped students, (B) used by
19 members of the fire police on a stationary vehicle as a warning signal
20 during traffic directing operations at the scene of a fire, (C) on rescue
21 vehicles, (D) used by chief executive officers of emergency medical
22 service organizations as provided in subsection (a) of section 14-96p,
23 (E) ambulances, as defined in section 19a-175, [or] (F) used by local fire
24 marshals or directors of emergency management, or (G) on motor
25 vehicles of paid and volunteer fire chiefs and their designated
26 assistants or deputies while on the way to the scene of a fire or other
27 emergency requiring their services, (6) flashing green lights used by
28 members of volunteer ambulance associations or companies as
29 provided in subsection (c) of section 14-96p, or (7) flashing white lights
30 or flashing lights of other colors specified by federal requirements for
31 the manufacture of an ambulance used in conjunction with flashing
32 red lights or flashing head lamps and a flashing amber light on an
33 ambulance responding to an emergency call. The prohibitions in this
34 section shall not prevent the operator of a motor vehicle who while
35 traveling on a limited access divided highway, because of the grade, is
36 unable to maintain the minimum speed of forty miles per hour, or who
37 while traveling on any other highway is operating such motor vehicle
38 at such slow speed as to obstruct or endanger following traffic, or the
39 operator of a disabled vehicle stopped on a hazardous location on the
40 highway, or in close proximity thereto, from flashing lights, installed
41 on the vehicle primarily for other purposes, in any manner that the
42 operator selects so as to indicate that such vehicle is traveling slowly,
43 obstructing traffic or is disabled and is a hazard to be avoided. The
44 commissioner is authorized, at such commissioner's discretion, to issue
45 special permits for the use of flashing or revolving lights on emergency
46 vehicles, on escort vehicles and on maintenance vehicles, provided any
47 person, firm or corporation other than the state or any metropolitan
48 district, town, city or borough shall pay an annual permit fee of two

49 dollars for each such vehicle, provided vehicles not registered in this
50 state used for transporting or escorting any vehicle or load or
51 combinations of vehicles or vehicles and load which is or are either
52 oversize or overweight, or both, when operating under a permit issued
53 by the Commissioner of Transportation pursuant to section 14-270,
54 shall not require such permit. On and after July 1, 1985, such annual
55 permit fee shall be three dollars, on and after July 1, 1989, four dollars
56 and fifty cents, on and after July 1, 1991, five dollars and seventy-five
57 cents and on and after July 1, 1993, seven dollars.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2002</i>

PS *Joint Favorable*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note**State Impact:**

Fund-Type	Agency Affected	Current FY \$	FY 03 \$	FY 04 \$
TF - Revenue Loss	Motor Vehicle Dept.	None	2,100	2,100

Note: TF=Transportation Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

This bill allows paid and volunteer fire chiefs and their designated assistants or deputies to use flashing red lights on their vehicles while on the way to the scene of a fire or other emergency requiring their services.

Currently, if permits are issued at the commissioner's discretion, the permittees must pay an annual fee of \$7. However, if the vehicles are specifically identified under Section 14-96q, CGS, no permits are required. Since under the bill these vehicles would be specifically identified under Section 14-96q, a revenue loss of approximately \$2,100 to the Transportation Fund can be anticipated.

OLR Bill Analysis

SB 395

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF FLASHING RED LIGHTS ON MOTOR VEHICLES OF FIRE CHIEFS**SUMMARY:**

This bill codifies current Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) practice by allowing paid and volunteer fire chiefs and their designated assistants or deputies to use flashing red lights on their vehicles when going to a fire scene or other emergency requiring their services. An existing law, which this bill does not change, allows the chiefs and their first and second deputies (or assistants, if there are no deputies) to have flashing or revolving white lights.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2002

BACKGROUND***Flashing Lights Allowed By Law***

One law generally prohibits flashing lights on vehicles other than school buses, except to indicate a turn and, in certain designated colors, on:

1. vehicles used by volunteer or civil preparedness fire companies;
2. certain emergency and maintenance vehicles (with a DMV permit);
3. overweight or oversize vehicles, or their escort vehicles, with Department of Transportation permits;
4. vehicles used by rural mail carriers;
5. vehicles for 15 or fewer handicapped students when the vehicles stop to pick up or let off students;
6. stationary vehicles used by fire police officers to direct traffic at a fire scene;
7. rescue vehicles;
8. vehicles used by chief executive officers of emergency medical service organizations;
9. ambulances; and
10. vehicles used by members of volunteer ambulance associations or

companies.

The law also allows motorists to use flashing lights in certain situations where they are traveling slowly or parked in areas that can create a hazard.

Another law generally prohibits the use of flashing lights except to indicate a turn and, in certain designated colors, on:

1. vehicles for 15 or fewer handicapped students when they stop to let off or pick up students;
2. vehicles being operated by the chief executive officer of an emergency medical service organization;
3. vehicles being operated by a local fire marshal or a local director of emergency management while on the way to an emergency;
4. fire emergency apparatus;
5. vehicles of paid and volunteer fire chiefs and their first and second deputies and assistants;
6. vehicles operated by volunteer emergency medical technicians or members of volunteer fire departments or companies on the way to a medical emergency or fire scene, with written approval from the town's chief law enforcement officer;
7. ambulances responding to emergencies; and
8. school buses.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety Committee

Joint Favorable Report

Yea 22 Nay 0